

BORN TO SERVE

By CHARLES M. SHELDON,

Author of "IN HIS STEPS," "JOHN KING'S QUESTION CLASS," "EDWARD BLAKE," Etc.

Instantly, Barbara's face became grave, and Mr. Morton as he raised his hat seemed equally sober. The



"FARLON ME, MISS CLARK."

Dillingham passed them with what seemed to Barbara unusually severe faces. The light of the afternoon suddenly went out. She was no longer a college graduate, an educated young woman the equal in everything but wealth, of this glorious creature she had just passed; she was only a hired girl, a servant. And the girl that yawned between her and the minister was too deep to be bridged. It was folly to be happy any longer. Happiness was not for her; only ambition was left, and even that might not be possible if this social settlement plan was to be involved in hers, and—

"I beg pardon, Miss Clark, but did I hear you say the other night at Mrs. Vane's that you or your mother had known the Dillinghams before you came to Crawford?"

Mr. Morton was coming to the relief of her embarrassment.

"No, mother is related to one branch of the family. Mrs. Dillingham has been very kind to me since that evening," she added. "I have not been courteous, hardly, in response to her invitation."

"It's a very nice family," Mr. Morton said, quite calmly.

"Yes, Miss Dillingham is a remarkably beautiful person, don't you think?" Barbara was not quite herself, or she would not have asked such a question.

"She is not as beautiful as some one else I know," replied Morton, suddenly, and as he said it he looked Barbara full in the face.

It was one of those sudden youthlings to temptation that the young minister in his singularly strong, earnest, serious life could number on his fingers. He regretted it the minute the words were spoken, but that could not recall them. Over Barbara's face the warm blood flowed in a deepening wave, and for a moment her heart stood still. Then, as she walked on, she was conscious of Mr. Morton's swiftly spoken apology as he noted her distress.

"Pardon me, Miss Clark. I forgot myself. I will you forget—will you forgive me?"

Then Barbara had murmured some reply, and he had taken off his hat very gravely and bowed as he took leave of her, and she had gone on with a flaming face and a beating heart.

"He asked me to forget it? I cannot," she said, as she hurried her face in her hands up in her room, while the tears wet her cheeks. "He asked me to forgive it. Forgive him for saying what he did? But it was not anything very dreadful." She smiled, then frowned at the recollection. "Silly compliment that gentlemen are in the habit of paying. But was it silly, or was he in the habit of paying such? Was it not a real expression of what he felt?" She put her hands over her ears, as if to shut out whispers that might kill her ambitions and put something else in the place. But when she went down to work a little later she could not shut out the picture of that afternoon. She could neither forget nor forgive, O Barbara! If he could only know how his plea for forgiveness was being denied; and with a smile, not a frown in the heart!

The rest of that week Mr. Morton stayed away from Mrs. Ward's, although Mr. Ward had expected him to tea on Friday. He sent a note pleading stress of church work. Mr. Ward commented on it at the table.

"Morton is killing himself already. He seems to think he can do everything. He won't last out half his days at the present rate."

"He needs a good wife more than anything else," Mrs. Ward said, carelessly. "Some one ought to manage him and tell him what to do."

"Yes, I suppose every woman in the church knows just the girl for him, and is ready to hint her name," Mr. Ward remarked.

"If he marries anyone in Marble Square parish it will create trouble. It always does," said Mrs. Ward.

"I think Morton has some reason to look out for that," replied Mr. Ward, briefly.

Barbara heard every word as she was serving at the table, and for a moment her face might betray her. But Mrs. Ward, in whom Barbara had never confided, as she had in Mrs. Vane, did not detect anything, and Barbara found relief by turning soon to her kitchen.

The following Sunday she had an experience which added to her knowledge of the position she occupied as a

servant, and led up to the great crisis of her life, as she will always regard it. Since entering Mrs. Ward's family she had not attended evening service in any of the Crawford churches, owing to her desire to spend that time with her mother. But on this particular Sunday following her interview with Mrs. Vane and her talk with Mr. Morton, she decided that she would go out to the Endeavor meeting at the Marble Square church. There was no service after the Christian Endeavor meeting on this Sunday evening, as it was the custom one Sunday in every month to give the whole evening to the society and its work. The minister was in the habit of attending this service and giving it his special notice, sometimes by making a direct address on the topic of the evening, or by taking a part assigned to him beforehand by the leader.

When Barbara went to that evening, the large, handsome chapel of the Marble Square church was rapidly filling up. The talented, earnest, handsome young preacher was very popular with the young people, and the society had increased rapidly in membership and attendance since Morton's arrival.

The usher showed Barbara to a seat about half way down the aisle. As she sat down she noticed Mr. Morton talking with a group of young people down in front. When they separated, he looked up and saw her, and coming down the aisle, he gravely shook hands, and then introduced her to the young woman next to her. He then went to the door, greeted some of the members coming in, and then went around by a side aisle and sat down on a front seat just as the meeting began.

It had been a long time since Barbara had attended a Christian Endeavor meeting. She felt that she was growing rather old for it, but to-night she enjoyed it thoroughly. When the time came for Mr. Morton to speak, she was surprised to find how her anticipation of what he had to say was not spoiled by anything he said. It was all so manly, with such a genuine, real fragrance to it, so tinged with healthy humor, so helpful for real life, that it helped her. She was grateful to him. Like the first sermon she had heard him preach, his talk to-night made her feel the value of life and the strength of effort in God's world.

Then suddenly, while she was looking at the earnest, eloquent face, the consciousness of the remoteness of his life from hers smote her into despair. When the service was over, she did not want to remain to the quiet, social gathering that followed. But her neighbor to whom Morton had introduced her asked her to come into the little gathering of other visitors and strangers who were being received by an introduction committee and made welcome to the society, the committee giving all strangers a copy of cards and other printed matter belonging to the society, and introducing them to one another as well as to members.

It was one of the new methods pursued by this committee to ask all strangers to sign a little card giving the address of the newcomer, so that some one of the society might call during the week, and, if necessary, act as escort to the next meeting. One of these cards was given to Barbara; and in a spirit of perversity, growing out of her feeling regarding her position, she signed her name and put under it the words: "House servant at Mr. Ward's, 36 Hamilton street."

It was altogether unnecessary for her to be ostentatious with her position; but she was not perfect, and felt an unnatural desire to test her reception right in Mr. Morton's own society. A few of the young people in the Marble Square church knew who she was and what she was doing, and with a few exceptions she had been treated with great kindness, no discrimination whatever being made. But the majority of the young people did not know her, and to-night she was plainly dressed, her face was bearing marks of the weariness of the strain of the last month's work, and it was not surprising that she was suspicious of every suggestion of a slight.

When the committee and the other strangers finally went out and mingled with the others in the large room, Barbara thought she detected a distinct coldness to her. She was certain of it, and her position had been what she afterward found out, she did the committee an injustice, as they had not told anyone of her work. But she was left alone in the midst of all the others, and in spite of her habits of self-control and her previous experience she began to feel a bitterness that was contrary to her sweet nature.

She looked around the room, and noticed Miss Dillingham talking with a group of older girls who had begun to come in the society a little while after Mr. Morton's call to Crawford; and she went over to her and spoke to her.

And then it was that Miss Dillingham, who was not perfect any more than Barbara, did as wrong as Barbara as she had ever done in her life. She simply nodded to Barbara without saying a word, and went on talking without introducing her friends to Barbara or taking any other notice of her.

Barbara instantly stepped back away from the group, while her face glowed and then paled. As she turned sharply around to go out of the door which was near Mr. Morton's front row. He had witnessed the little scene.

"You will always be welcome in our Endeavor society, Miss Clark," he said, while the color that mounted to his face was as deep as hers.

"I shall never come again so long as I am a servant!" replied Barbara, in a tone as near that of passion as she had ever shown to him. And with the words she opened the door and went out into the night, leaving him standing there and looking at her with a look that would have made her tremble if she had lifted her face to his.

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